Rt. Hon. Mrs. Thatcher,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1.

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P.V. Barbara,
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London E1 9LQ.

27th August '90.

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Dear Mrs. Thacther,

I am writing to let you know that in my view your government's aggressive military buildup in the Gulf, and your rhetoric of 'rule of law/ law of the jungle', 'naked aggression' etc., are an extreme example of double standards and outright hypocrisy. When the US invaded Grenada and Panama, and set up, armed, bankrolled and controlled the thuggish terrorists known as the 'Contras', you and your government made no move to get mandatory sanctions imposed upon the US. When the World Court found in Nicaragua's favour, and the US refused to accept it's decision, again you made no attempt to enforce compliance with International law.

Going further back, to 1975, another case of 'naked aggression' occurred. Unlike in the Iraq/Kuwait situation, however, then it was the case of a pro-Western nation, Indonesia, invading a tiny neighbour, East Timor. In marked contrast with Kuwait, where you see a pro-Western feudal regime overthrown, and with it the loss of cheap oil to Western markets, successive British governments have seen no gain in supporting East Timor; indeed, in every General Assembly vote on the issue, from '75 to '82, Britain has abstained. And this despite the deaths of some 200,000 Timorese as a dirct result of Indonesia's invasion and subsequent occupation and annexation (about a third of the pre-invasion population of some 688,000). In a letter to Sir Hugh Rossi dated 24th May '89, Tim Eggar explains: 'We took the view that by doing so (abstaining in Gen. Assembly votes), in the company of a growing number of other countries, we could help the process of reconciliation and the search for a diplomatic solution between Indonesia and Portugal'. This is the same kind of reply from successive governments that has been dished out to MP's and the public since the invasion; what a difference to the Kuwait situation! No talk there of processes of reconciliation; no abstentions in the United Nations. No talk of'rule of law/ law of the jungle' or 'naked aggression'; oh, no. Trade and arms sales, and perceived strategic and other self-interests entail the sacrifice of the Timorese to their fate. Indeed, the case is even worse than this. Not only did Britain accept the invasion/occupation; it actually saw it as in it's own interest, as Sir John Ford's letter to the Foreign Office shows: 'Certainly as seen from here it is in Britain's interest that Indonesia should absorb the territory as soon as and as unobtrusively as possible; and that if it come to the crunch and there is a row in the United Nations we should keep our heads down and avoid siding against the Indonesian Government' (Ford was British Ambassador to Jakarta at the time, and sent the above message in July '75, some six months before the invasion) (quoted from 'The War Against East Timor', Budiardjo and Liong). I realise of course that you and your Government cannot be held responsible for events in 1975; but you have continued with the same policy of tacitly accepting Indonesia's continueing illegal occupation of East Timor.

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I am not writing this to in any way condone or defend Saddam Hussein's bloody, murderous regime. Your government, however, could have been in no doubt about the nature of the Iraqi regime previous to it's attack upon Kuwait; yet there were no calls for mandatory sanctions after it's unprovoked attack upon the equally bloody and obnoxious Iranian regime, nor when Iraq used chemical weapons upon Iran and upon it's own Kurdish nationals. Like the US, the UK uses human rights rhetoric when it suits; it speaks of 'rule of law' v 'law of the jungle' when it sees it in it's own interest; calls for sanctions when it sees fit, but oh! calamity! not in the case of South Africa ('sanctions never work') or of course Indonesia; supports all manner of action against states that sponsor terrorism (unless it happens to be a friendly state doing the supporting, such as the US supporting and running the 'Contras' or South Africa destabilising the frontline states).

Pure unadulterated hypocrisy, I would call it. What would you call it? Pragmatism?

Yours sincerely,

Paul Barbara.

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